

(Washington, DC) - Congressman Wally Herger today voted in favor of H.R. 2419, the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Farm Bill). The bill passed the House by a vote of 318 to 106. The legislation now moves to the Senate for consideration before it can be sent to the President. Upon passage of the bill, Congressman Herger issued the following statement:

“A healthy and productive agricultural industry is a critically important part of Northern California's rural economy. We are the second largest rice growing region in the nation and grow over half of all the dried plums produced in the world. Our farmers are world leaders in almond and walnut production as well.

“Farm prices are strong right now, but if history is any guide, market conditions can and often do balance out. Northern California's farmers and ranchers face the constant threat of disease and insect infestation, as well as weather related disasters. It's important that America's farm policy recognizes the risk inherent in agricultural production and provides farmers and ranchers with the tools necessary to succeed in today's competitive global marketplace. This Farm Bill provides that support.

“It is by no means a perfect measure. But by-and-large this legislation provides important support for Northern California's multi-billion dollar agricultural economy. And it does so without raising taxes - an important improvement from the Farm Bill that passed the House last July.

“Although subsidy reform is a part of this bill, we shouldn't lose sight of the need to move toward a market-oriented system here at home combined with lower trade barriers overseas. As the lead Republican on the House Ways and Means Trade Subcommittee, I will continue to push for the removal of unfair trade barriers for U.S. agricultural products. Unless and until these unfair barriers are removed, I believe it would be unwise for the United States to unilaterally disarm by abandoning support for our farmers.”